

THE
P A D,

A FARCE,

IN ONE ACT,

AS PERFORMED AT THE

THEATRE-ROYAL, COVENT-GARDEN,

WITH GREAT APPLAUSE.

By ROBERT WOODBRIDGE. *K*

Vidi Cantharam SUBSARCINATAM.

TERENCE.

L O N D O N :

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1793.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

M E N.

SIR SIMON MEAGRE, - *Mr. Quick.*
 CAPTAIN CREDULOUS, - *Mr. Harley.*
 LOVEJOKE, - - - - *Mr. Munden.*
 CLERIMONT, - - - - *Mr. Macready.*
 1st GENT, - - - - *Mr. Farley.*
 2d GENT. - - - - *Mr. Evatt.*
 3d GENT. - - - - *Mr. Thompson.*
 SERVANT, - - - - *Mr. Simmons.*
 SERVANT, - - - - *Mr. Blurton.*

W O M E N.

LADY MEAGRE, - - - - *Mrs. Webb.*
 MRS. CREDULOUS, - - - - *Mrs. Fawcett.*
 NANCY, - - - - *Mrs. Davies.*



The Lines marked with inverted Commas were omitted in the representation.



THE PAD.

SCENE I. THE STREET.

LOVEJOKE and CAPTAIN CREDULOUS.

LOVEJOKE.

HOW long have you been in London then, Captain Credulous?—I had not even heard of your arrival.

CAPTAIN CREDULOUS.

Not two hours.—I went immediately to my own house with the fond expectation of meeting a much-loved wife, whom I had not seen during a fifteen months voyage—Was it not natural?

LOVEJOKE.

Perfectly so—in these times of dove-like constancy.

(aside.)

CAPTAIN.

Then to find her in *such a situation!* What must have been my rage? my disappointment?—Ah, dear Love-

B

joke,

joke, after such an absence, to come home and find a wife in a state—I blush to mention. Could any thing be more provoking?

LOVEJOKE.

Nothing indeed.—But did you inform her of your suspicions?

CAPTAIN.

Suspensions!—'Tis a fact as clear as noon-day—her very appearance is enough to convince the most incredulous man in the kingdom—she's half gone I tell you—positively half gone.

LOVEJOKE.

So are you—in the high road from jealousy to madness.—I asked you a plain question: have you acquainted Mrs. Credulous with your observation of this *fact*, as you are pleased to term it?

CAPTAIN.

No; I was too much astonished.—I left her very soon, evidently sensible, however, of my dissatisfaction and anger, but ignorant of the cause.—She affected some uneasiness at my behaviour—but that will not so easily dupe me—I am too well aware of the craftiness of the sex.—They are all hypocrites.

LOVEJOKE.

They are indeed—almost as much as the men.

CAP-

THE PAD.

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CAPTAIN.

Oh, I'm mad—an impudent, daring woman!—
(walks about agitated.)

LOVEJOKE. (aside.)

Mrs. Credulous has always passed for a woman of fair character.—Oh, by Jupiter, I have it.—I have it.—I'd venture any wager, she's padded.

CAPTAIN.

Good morning, my dear friend, I'm going.

LOVEJOKE.

Going!—where?

CAPTAIN.

Home.—To turn her out.—She shan't stay in the house another minute.

LOVEJOKE.

No, no; that will not do. (I'll humour the jest) You must not think of acting so rashly.—What will the world say?

CAPTAIN.

“The world say.”—Say I have done right.

LOVEJOKE.

Indeed!

CAPTAIN.

Praise me.

THE PAD.

LOVEJOKE.

Blame you.

CAPTAIN.

Applaud me for my spirit.

LOVEJOKE.

Hoot you for your cruelty.

CAPTAIN.

Call me a man of honour, feeling, delicacy—one that has a proper idea of his own dignity.

LOVEJOKE.

Pho', they'll call you a brute, a coward, one that has not common humanity.

"Poor man!—to think of turning your wife out of doors for adultery!—Why, you'll have all the women in the nation against you—it has become quite a fashionable amusement of late." But, pray Captain, "since you seem so conversant with the opinions of the world," what do you think they'll say of your wife?

CAPTAIN.

"What can they say, but that she is treated as she merits?"—they'll call her infamous—undeserving.

LOVEJOKE.

Unfortunate, ill-used.

CAP-

CAPTAIN.

A miserable, abandoned woman.

LOVEJOKE.

There you are probably right.—Come, come, Captain, let me tell you, the world in these cases are more apt to blame the man than the woman.—“Nay, “don’t be enraged—’tis true.” The disgrace, I confess, ought to fall on the *offender*, not on the *offended*:—but as mankind generally act by contraries, they shoot the misdirected shafts of ridicule, where they should pour the balm of pity.

CAPTAIN.

Pity!—Am I then an object of pity?

LOVEJOKE.

Yes, you are, certainly—don’t be so angry.

CAPTAIN.

Pity!—(*scornfully*)—Who dares pity me?

LOVEJOKE.

I do—I pity you.

CAPTAIN.

Damme, Sir, what do you mean?

LOVEJOKE.

Why, I mean to pity you—but, if you don’t like it, I *won’t* pity you.—I never quarrel with my friends
about

about such trifles as pitying, loving, or hating them—and so I *won't* pity you, if it hurts you so much.

CAPTAIN.

Oh, I'm distracted; forgive my folly, Lovejoke, and advise me how to act.

LOVEJOKE.

That I would have done some time ago, but you were in too great a passion.—There was no more talking calmly to you, than to the winds in the midst of a storm.

CAPTAIN.

Now then. I am attentive.—What shall I do?

LOVEJOKE.

I would have you do nothing till you see me again.—I'll consider your case.

CAPTAIN.

Do, pray—in the mean time I'll call on Sir Simon Meagre.

Exit.

LOVEJOKE.

Your most obedient humble servant, Don Jealous-pate.—Now this is so much like the way of the world!—to fly into a terrible passion—bluster—swear—and talk of turning his wife out of doors for an *imaginary* crime, which he has given himself no pains to investigate.—“I scruple not to call it an imaginary
“crime,

“ crime, as I am pretty confident I can develop the
 “ whole matter—but that hereafter.”—I’ll plague him
 “ first to cure his groundless jealousy, which is no less
 “ ridiculous than his wife’s conduct.”—Ha, there’s Sir
 Simon Meagre, and old childless curmudgeon, with an
 ill-natured ugly wife.—Ha, the old Dotard little thinks
 how I intend to play him off to-day—ha, ha, I love a
 jest from my heart.

All-convenient pad!—“ how various are thy uses,
 “ —with thee the fair sinner contrives to hide her fail-
 “ ings, not, as before thy blest invention, by endea-
 “ vouring to diminish, but by encreasing her shape—
 “ not by endeavouring to prevent shame, but by setting
 “ it at defiance.”—Here thou hast made this poor jea-
 lous Captain almost mad with grief, and thou wilt pre-
 sently aid me in making Sir Simon mad with joy.—
 “ Yet there is one thing I don’t like you for—you are
 “ a Leveller—you are for making all alike.” *Exit.*

SCENE II.

Room in Sir Simon’s House.

Sir Simon and Lady Meagre.

LADY MEAGRE.

I wish I had never been such a fool as to be prevailed
 on to marry you.—I’m sure I have paid dear for the
 pleasure of being called Lady Meagre.—I have never
 been happy a moment since.

I

SIR

SIR SIMON.

Not so fast, my Lady, I was the greatest fool in that business.

LADY M.

I believe so.—You are a fool in every business.

SIR SIMON.

What!—you are an impudent woman—I have a mind to get a divorce—to turn you out of doors.

A servant announces Mr. Lovejoke, who enters.

LOVEJOKE.

My Lady Meagre, your most obedient.

LADY M. *(as she curtsies to Lovejoke.)*

Cruel wretch.—*(looking towards Sir Simon)* I won't stay in the room where he is.

LOVEJOKE.

Sir Simon, I fear I interrupt you.

SIR SIMON.

Oh, no, not at all.—I'm particularly pleas'd with your company, Sir—any company is better than one's wife's.

LOVEJOKE.

I'm sorry to hear you say so, Sir Simon, but I thought you had had a few words when I came in.

SIR

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SIR SIMON.

No, not a *few words*, when my Lady and I have any—we have in general a *devilish* many, I assure you.

LOVEJOKE.

I'm quite surprized!

SIR SIMON.

That's because you are not her husband.—The wonder would soon wear off then.—She is the most ill-temper'd, proud, spiteful devil that ever man had to wife.—Upon my honour, Mr. Lovejoke, I have been seriously meditating on sending her away from my house entirely—she may go back to her relations.

LOVEJOKE.

Oh, fie, Sir Simon, what will the world say?

SIR SIMON.

Pho—the devil take the world.

LOVEJOKE.

Bless us! I hope not. I have been always taught to pray for the contrary.

SIR SIMON.

Did ever a Baronet care what the world said?—Besides, this is a plain case—Here's a woman, whose temper and conduct render it impossible for me to live with her, and therefore I would take measures to live without her. What is to be said?

C

LOVE.

LOVEJOKE.

Ah, I will not anticipate.—I have too much friendship for you—but to turn out into the wide world a woman in her *condition*!!!

SIR SIMON.

Condition! I don't understand you. Do you suppose I shall not allow her a sufficient annuity?

LOVEJOKE.

No, no, I mean, I mean her *situation*—a woman in her *situation*.

SIR SIMON.

Situation—that will be changed, I allow—but she must thank herself for it.—If she had known how to conduct herself properly in her present situation, she would never feel the disagreeableness of a change.

LOVEJOKE.

Dear me—how dull you are!—you don't yet take me, Sir Simon,—I mean her—her *particular case*,—I don't know how to express my meaning.

SIR SIMON.

Nor I to understand it.

LOVEJOKE.

Have you not of late observ'd an *alteration* in your lady?

SIR

SIR SIMON.

Yes, but it has been devilishly for the worse, her ill humour encreases every day—

LOVEJOKE.

Pho, pho, I don't mean a *mental* but a *corporeal* alteration—

SIR SIMON.

Indeed I have never troubled myself much about her *corporeal* alterations.

LOVEJOKE.

“Now I'm sure you are jesting”—you must have notic'd an alteration in my Lady's shape, an encreasing roundness—in a word, Sir Simon, Lady Meagre is in the family way as they say, and I congratulate you on such a fortunate circumstance—If my wishes can avail, may it prove a Son and Heir, Sir Simon——

SIR SIMON. (*astonished and exulting*)

What! is it possible?—can it be true?—

LOVEJOKE.

Nothing more so—Come, come you must not affect to conceal it from us any longer, all your friends perceive it, and are coming in a body to congratulate you—I verily believe (looking at Sir Simon archly) you must have perceived it yourself—come confess candidly—

SIR SIMON.

Really—upon recollection, I think I have observed a
—a—but are you sure it is the case, my dear Lovejoke.

LOVEJOKE.

A man must have no eyes not to see it.—

SIR SIMON.

Indeed, I have observ'd something of a—

LOVEJOKE.

Of a rotundity—Sir Simon—Something of a—

SIR SIMON.

Of what I thought to have been only an agreeable
embonpoint as the French call it,—but your know-
ledge of things, Mr. Lovejoke is indisputable; it con-
vinces me—I'll—I'll—but what shall I do my friend—
I have alas! just quarrelled with my Lady (*sorrow-
fully*)

LOVEJOKE.

Do!—turn her out of doors certainly—send her
to her relations.—

SIR SIMON.

Pho pho, how teasing! —Why the World would
call me a brute, a monster to send her away in that
condition.—

LOVEJOKE.

LOVEJOKE.

The World?—Sir Simon,—the Devil take the World. Who cares for it—not a Baronet, certainly.—

SIR SIMON.

Distressing!—This is illnatur'd to retort upon me those silly speeches—I was a little angry when I made use of them—You know I had just had a few words with my poor dear amiable Lady—

LOVEJOKE.

No—not a few, you know,—You have always a devilish many with the spiteful creature when it happens—

SIR SIMON.

Oh, you cruel tormentor,—do tell me what I shall do in this case——

LOVEJOKE.

Well then seriously, as I'm your best friend, Sir Simon, I'd have you make it up with my Lady immediately—

SIR SIMON.

I will—I'll go to her directly—I'm so overjoy'd at this good news—so renovated—render'd so youthful, so active as it were—that I could do—I could do, my dear friend any thing.—

LOVEJOKE.

LOVEJOKE.

“Well the only thing you have to do now is to
“make peace with your Lady”

SIR SIMON.

But why now did not the fly baggage acquaint me
with this herself?

LOVEJOKE.

Oh—the natural modesty of the sex, Sir Simon!—
The Ladies of the *present times* blush at the very sup-
position of such a circumstance—You must know little
of them to suppose they would make a public shew
and ostentation of it—

SIR SIMON.

Well—I go—

LOVEJOKE.

A moment—You must not take any notice of it to
her.—

SIR SIMON.

No!—

LOVEJOKE.

No—nothing except a distant hint or so—as I ob-
served just now—it would wound her bashful modesty
—No, you must pretend that your pure affection for
her leads you to wish a reconciliation—besides I in-
tend to visit you this afternoon with a few friends—
You

You shall then give us a public audience in the hall, attended by your Lady—and in a speech suited to the occasion, publicly announce the circumstance, and receive our congratulations——That's my plan——

SIR SIMON.

Excellent!—

LOVEJOKE.

I shall be pleased to the Soul to see how astonished they will all be,—particularly your Lady——

SIR SIMON.

So shall I—ha, ha, ha,—excellent!—don't fail to bring as many as you can——

LOVEJOKE.

No, no,—the more the merrier, as they say. Not a word to my Lady. Sir Simon——

Exit—

SIR SIMON.

What a blessing it is to have a true friend, I declare I should never have discovered this circumstance myself——Yet (surveying himself) I don't so much wonder at this event, as at its not having taken place sooner, considering every thing—I'm not at all infirm—in good health—tolerably robust—and the rather old, yet what is that to the purpose—I've often heard my Grandmother say I was born under the planet Venus——

Exit—

SCENE

SCENE III.—STREET—

Lovejoke and Captain Credulous.

LOVEJOKE.

The disagreeable story I have to tell you Captain, is rather trying.—Do you think you can bear to hear it?

CAPTAIN—

Oh as patiently as a Lamb—I can bear to hear anything now.

LOVEJOKE.

Can you?

CAPTAIN.

Come, let me here what you have to tell me—it shall not provoke me, be it what it will.—

LOVEJOKE.

You are quite cool then?

CAPTAIN.

Cool as Frost, Snow, Ice, will that satisfy you?

LOVEJOKE.

Sufficiently—Now then prepare—prepare, I say.—

CAPTAIN.

Well—I do—

LOVEJOKE.

LOVEJOKE.

No, your face is not of a proper length yet— your visage is not pallid enough—you do not stare me in the face—

CAPTAIN.

I do—I do—go on—

LOVEJOKE.

Pho!—you don't open your mouth—

CAPTAIN.

What trifling—I shall be in a fury if you don't speak—

LOVEJOKE.

Heyday—The frost seems to be going off already—

CAPTAIN.

Will you speak?—

LOVEJOKE.

“Poor man! as I see you can't retain your curiosity —I'll relieve you—and yet” I've nothing more to say than that your Wife is—

CAPTAIN.

What?—

LOVEJOKE.

A Woman.—

CAPTAIN.

A Woman! A Woman!—

LOVEJOKE.

Yes a Woman—you seem astonished,—If she is not a woman, she is a non-natural.

D

CAPTAIN.

CAPTAIN.

And is this all? Is this your dismal story?

LOVEJOKE.

Yes—"I'm sure 'tis a dismal one enough to a
"married Man—for my own part I would never wish
"to be told any thing worse of my wife, than that she
"was a thorough woman".

CAPTAIN.

What do you mean Sir, by thus tormenting me?—

LOVEJOKE.

"Bless us! when an odd kind of a frosty, icy Man
"this is!—I should rather have supposed him under
"the immediate influence of the Dog-days—

CAPTAIN.

(Going.)

"Well, Sir, I have done with you—I see what your
"friendship is—

LOVEJOKE.

"Stop—you are angry without cause"—Let me
explain my meaning—I inform'd you, your Wife
was a Woman—in that word I included the inclina-
tions and conduct of the Sex, and would have pro-
ceeded, had your impatience suffered me, to demon-
strate to you that Mrs. Credulous would act and has
acted like all other Women.—

CAPTAIN.

Has acted!—what has she done?

LOVEJOKE.

You must perceive, dear Credulous, how disagreeable
a business

a business it is for a friend to interfere in, however as I am anxious for your honour, I must inform you that I have *myself* noticed your Wife to increase gradually in bulk for some time past—and—

CAPTAIN.

Ah then 'tis confirm'd—I'm undone—ruined, abused—but what, you were going to add something else—let me know all my misery—

LOVEJOKE.

Only that your Niece Nancy is, I fear in the same condition—

CAPTAIN.

My Niece too !—

LOVEJOKE.

Have you not then observed it ?

CAPTAIN,

I have not yet seen her since my return.—

LOVEJOKE.

Oh, you cannot fail of observing it.—I would have you warn her admirer Clerimont of it,—he may otherwise, when he discovers it, think you an accomplice in the matter, and that you mean to pass her off upon him.

CAPTAIN.

Miserable Man that I am !——I'll go to them directly—

LOVEJOKE.

Do—but take care not to acquaint her yet with the specific cause of your suspicion—

D 2

CAPTAIN,

CAPTAIN.

Why not—

LOVEJOKE.

It is necessary for the forwarding a scheme I have in contemplation to expose her more publicly—you can tell her you have good reasons to be dissatisfied, that you have been informed of her improper conduct during your absence, “with a numberless other “things, which a jealous imagination can always “readily furnish—you’ll be at no loss, I warrant,” but take particular care not to mention the main fact—

CAPTAIN.

Well, I am guided entirely by you—

LOVEJOKE,

And another caution—don’t quarrel with them—that will be ridiculous—

CAPTAIN,

No, no, I’ll be cool—cool as I am now—I’ll not quarrel at all.

Exit—

LOVEJOKE.

Ha, ha, ha, excellent sport we shall have—delightful Pad!—May thy genius of the inventor be rewarded with a patent for the sole making and vending thee for the universal use of the Ladies—I mean *Ladies of Quality*—it would not do for *common Ladies*, as the jest would not pass current there.—

Exit,

SCENE

SCENE IV.

A Room at Sir Simon's.

Sir Simon and Lady Meagre.

SIR SIMON.

Affure yourself, my dear Lady Meagre, I have not had a moment's ease since our unfortunate fracas.—*(aside)* By all that's lovely, 'tis just as Lovejoke said.

LADY M.

I can't understand you, Sir Simon, you treated me this morning with the greatest indifference — nay, cruelty, and now you are all love and affection. *(aside)* This is very strange—he must mean to deceive me.— I'll be on my guard.

SIR SIMON.

Ah, my love, no man can have more affection for any woman than I have for you, my dear Lady—let us be friends—come.

LADY M.

Have you then forgotten so soon all your unkind language?—*(aside)* I'll humour him to sound his intentions.

SIR SIMON.

Oh, say no more of it—'tis all done away from this moment.—Can I behold you, my sweet Lady, in *this situation*, and not love you with all possible affection?

LADY

LADY M.

Astonishing!

SIR SIMON.

This *tender situation*!—(*archly*).

LADY M.

A tender situation indeed! what I have seldom been used to from him. (*aside*) Really, Sir Simon, I begin myself to think my situation something different from what it was a little while ago.

SIR SIMON.

Do you then confess it, my sweet angel? why, why not impart it to me sooner?

LADY M.

What, before its existence!—That would indeed have been laughable.

SIR SIMON.

True, true—well, my dear, we'll change the subject—I'll not press the delicacy of your feelings too much.

LADY M. (*aside*).

To what, in the name of wonder, can all this tend?

SIR SIMON.

Come, my love, I'll attend you to your toilette, (*taking her by the arm*).

LADY M. (*aside*).

Surely the man is bewitched—I'm almost afraid to go with him.

SIR

SIR SIMON (*aside as he goes out*).

O lucky, lucky Sir Simon!—what a day of gratification will this be to you. *Exeunt.*

SCENE V.

Room at Captain Credulous's.

CAPTAIN (*to a servant*).

Tell them to come to me directly.—I shall be in a fury if they keep me waiting a moment. (*exit servant.*)

Oh, what a misfortune is it to be born a man!—what miseries has he to undergo!—what vexations!—what disappointments!

Enter Mrs. Credulous and Nancy.

MRS. CREDULOUS.

My dear, we were coming as quickly we could—you look disturbed still.

CAPTAIN.

Not without reason—madam.

MRS. CREDULOUS.

What is the reason?—What is the matter?—tell me—that I may at least *participate* in your uneasiness.

CAPTAIN (*ironically*).

And you would then kindly participate in my uneasiness?

MRS. CREDULOUS.

Certainly, my love.

CAPTAIN.

My love, do you say?—nay, nay, don't act the hypocrite so far.—I shall be in a violent rage presently.

MRS. CREDULOUS.

The hypocrite!—what can you mean?

CAPTAIN (*very angrily*)

You'll carry the jest too far, I tell you.

MRS. CREDULOUS.

Is this the tenderness of our meeting after so long an absence?—this the reward of my faithful love and anxious expectation of your return?

CAPTAIN.

Out, out, you snake.—*You* talk of faithful love!—*you*, who are the cause of all my misery!—*you*, who have disappointed all my fond hopes of you!—Oh, I have a mind to shew you that I have discovered *all* your guilt, notwithstanding my friend's advice.

MRS. CREDULOUS.

Inhuman man!—I see plainly some vile wretch has formed a cruel plot of accusation against me—what, or for what purpose I know not.

CAPTAIN.

Let your inconstancy—your forfeited vows inform you what plot it is.

MRS. CREDULOUS.

Now then you speak out—now I know the foul charge—and to convince you of my innocence, will shew you how indignantly I can treat the accusation.—I will neither see you, nor hold converse with you more, till you find out your own mistake, and sue my forgiveness of so vile a calumny. (*Exit.*)

CAP-

CAPTAIN.

Wicked woman ! does she brave it ?—Her very appearance speaks her guilt too manifestly for contradiction—except by the barefaced and shameless.—Why don't you follow her, (*to Nancy*) you, companion and sharer of her guilt ?—I see my friend is right ; you are both in the same situation. Begone from my sight.—

(Exit Nancy.)

Unparalleled, yet cunning impudence !—“ had I been inclined to allude to her precise *situation*—’twould have been impossible.—She took care to prevent it “ by the first mention of her inconstancy.”—Oh, the degeneracy of the sex ! Their grandmothers would have died away with shame at the very suspicion of incontinence and infidelity.

SCENE VI.

Servant announces Clerimont, who enters.

CLERIMONT.

Captain Credulous, I'm happy to see you safe again in England.

CAPTAIN.

I thank you, Mr. Clerimont,—but if you please, will wave compliments for the present ; I sent for you on business of great importance.—You seem to admire my niece Nancy.

CLERIMONT.

I more than admire her—I love—I adore her.

CAPTAIN.

'Tis pity then but you had chosen a better idol for your worship

E

CLERI-

CLERIMONT.

Sir !

CAPTAIN.

I say, your love is useless—mistaken—misplaced.

CLERIMONT.

I hope, Sir, you do not intend to refuse your consent—I had been led to expect—

CAPTAIN.

—That I was such a fool, they could do as they pleas'd—ha?—Let me tell you seriously, I do refuse my consent, and on reasonable grounds.

CLERIMONT.

I am very sorry.

CAPTAIN.

Sorry!—for what?—because I am kind enough to prevent you from throwing yourself into the same situation with myself.

CLERIMONT.

Sir, I'm quite at a loss.

CAPTAIN.

Yes, I tell you—my wife has shamefully disgraced my bed, during my absence, and your dear, innocent Nancy is as bad.

CLERIMONT.

My Nancy bad ! impossible.

CAPTAIN.

Yes, bad—*shameless—immodest*.—I have proofs of the incontinence of both.

CLERI-

CLERIMONT.

Proofs of their incontinence !

CAPTAIN.

Yes, irrefragable.—Why, Sir, I have had *ocular demonstration*—but—you—you are an *innocent* young man, Mr. Clerimont, and must excuse my explaining myself farther to you—but let my positive assertion convince you—I cannot be deceived.

CLERIMONT.

You distract me—it cannot be true—my Nancy has been falsely accused by some villain, whom—

CAPTAIN.

Hold your tongue—I tell you again I have had *ocular demonstration*—let that satisfy you, and rid yourself of her as soon as you can. *(Exit.*

CLERIMONT *(solus)*.

Ah, then it must be true.—“ Oh, what an artful, “ wicked wretch must she have been ! I thought her “ all innocence—all loveliness.”——“ What an unexpected stroke ! to find her, whom I esteemed un- “ spotted as snow, and virtuous as a saint, blasted and “ deformed by vice !”—Here she comes so lovely, so innocent in appearance, I hardly know how to be angry with her.—She seems dejected too—but that’s hypocrisy, I suppose.

SCENE VII.

Clerimont and Nancy.

CLERIMONT.

My dear—I mean Madam—Miss Nancy *(aside—I don’t know what to say to her)*.

E 2

NANCY.

NANCY.

You seem unwell, Mr. Clerimont.

CLERIMONT.

Yes, I am *not* very well—that is, I am very bad.

NANCY.

Heav'ns, what ails you? (*drawing nearer*)

CLERIMONT.

Oh, go farther from me—you make me worse.

NANCY.

Is then my company disagreeable to you?

CLERIMONT.

Yes—no—yes it is.—(*aside, I'll tell her all at once*)—
Captain Credulous has informed me.—

NANCY.

Informed you!—of what?

CLERIMONT.

Of—of—.

NANCY.

Speak—I'm impatient to know the cause of your unaccountable conduct.

CLERIMONT.

Miss Nancy,—*your* unaccountable conduct is the cause of mine.

NANCY.

Strange! what conduct do you mean?

CLERIMONT.

Why, I don't know—*your* conduct—I have had ocu-

lar demonst——. No, no, I mistake—'tis the captain who has had *ocular demonstration* of your falsehood.

NANCY.

“ Insulting impudence !”—the captain, you say ?

CLERIMONT.

Yes, Madam.

NANCY.

Then I'm under no apprehension.—He has cruelly quarrelled with and abused his wife, and as a cloak for his malicious conduct, would now, I suppose, involve me in the same unjust accusation.—But if *you* can be so easily duped—so soon prevailed upon to think so ill of her whom you have hitherto thought proper to be pleased with—your love could not be excessive—I'm contented to *resign* you.

CLERIMONT.

Resign me !—impudence !—this is adding insult to injury—positive proof to mere suspicion—'tis *I* (*angrily*) that *resign* you—*renounce* you—and de——, despise you almost.

NANCY.

Nay, don't scruple about it—it will not do much violence to your feelings.

CLERIMONT.

Nor to your's, madam, I'm sure—your guilt is now evident—I have not a doubt of it.

NANCY.

I'm sorry, Sir, my time does not permit me to stay
to

to be abused any longer—I'm going to Sir Simon Meagre's.—If you have any more charges to bring, you'll find me there. *(Exit.*

CLERIMONT *(solus).*

Confusion!—she absolutely laughs at me—derides me—!—Her guilt is plain from the undaunted impudence of her conduct. If I ever see her or speak to her more, may I be dubb'd the greatest fool in nature.

(Exit.

SCENE VIII.

Hall in Sir Simon's House.

(Several Ladies and Gentleman are discovered as waiting the entrance of others.)

1st GENT.

For what purpose are we summoned here?

2d GENT.

Faith, I don't know—Lovejoke is at the bottom of it, so that I suppose we shall have some sport presently—you know his character.

3d GENT.

Oh—Is Lovejoke the primum mobile of the business?

2d GENT.

Yes.

3d GENT.

Then we may look for some laughable issue.—Here he comes with two ladies.

Enter

Enter Mr. Lovejoke with Mrs. Credulous and Nancy.

LOVEJOKE.

Gentlemen, I intended to have been with you sooner—I hope I have not wearied your patience—if I have, let these two fair intercessors plead for my forgiveness.

1st GENT.

No, no, we cannot suffer the ladies to *plead*—their *appearance* is sufficient to procure you pardon.

3d GENT.

Lovejoke is an artful fellow—he always contrives to bring some charm with him to do away one's anger, before one has time to chide him.

LOVEJOKE.

What, Is not Captain Credulous here, nor Clerimont—they'll not arrive before Sir Simon enters—Mrs. Credulous, where are they?

MRS. CREDULOUS.

Indeed, I don't know, Sir.

LOVEJOKE.

What, have you then lost the captain again so soon?—oh, he's a *fickle* dog, I'm sure, or he could not so soon run from such charms.

2d GENT.

Is Captain Credulous expected?

LOVEJOKE.

Certainly—I was commissioned to invite him myself.

1st GENT.

I saw him at the corner of the street as I came in.

LOVE-

LOVEJOKE.

Did you?—I'll fetch him in—a dilatory fellow!

(Exit.)

1st GENT.

Pray, ladies, what scene are we going to have acted here?

MRS. CREDULOUS.

Scene, Sir! I really don't know what you mean.

2d GENT.

What *jest*, Madam?

MRS. CREDULOUS.

Upon my word, Sir, I am much at a loss to understand you.—Mr. Lovejoke brought us here at the express desire of Sir Simon.—I wonder we have not seen him yet.

3d GENT.

Well—the first part seems to be a trial of our patience.

Enter Lovejoke, with Captain Credulous and Clerimont.

LOVEJOKE.

I have found the loiterers—I could hardly persuade them to come in.—One was afraid of meeting his wife—the other his mistress.

(the gentlemen laugh—Mrs. Credulous and Nancy walk to the opposite side of the stage, leaving the captain and Clerimont on the side by which they entered, and the company in the middle).

LOVE-

LOVEJOKE.

Ha, ha, ha, why now this is, I own, a tolerably faithful picture of matrimony—the Captain and his lady perform their parts to a miracle—*far as the poles asunder*.—ha, ha, ha, ha.

CAPTAIN (*aside*).

Fury!—has he brought me in here to make a jest of me?

MRS. CREDULOUS (*aside*).

Heav'ns!—Is our quarrel then to be made public?—Are we to be the scorn of all our acquaintance?

1st GENT.

Very well—very good, Lovejoke.

2d GENT.

But what are we to think of the other two?—the unmarried pair?

LOVEJOKE.

Oh—we have in them a specimen of *involved courtship*—or the *lovers in opposition*.—Faith they must make a rare pair after marriage, that act so contrary to all the rest of the world beforehand. Ha, ha.

NANCY (*aside*).

How am I exposed by Clerimont's foolish jealousy!

CLERIMONT.

How has this worthless girl brought shame and confusion on me!

CAPTAIN (*angrily coming forward*).

Mr. Lovejoke, I don't know what you mean.

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LOVE-

LOVEJOKE.

Hush, don't be angry—here's Sir Simon and his lady coming.

Enter Sir Simon, leading in his lady—they seat themselves on a sofa—the rest are seated on each side.

SIR SIMON *(rising)*.

My dear friends, I have taken the liberty to convene you on a very important occasion; the antiquity and honour of my family is unquestionable; and it was expected on my coming to the family title and dignity, that I should take the necessary precautions for perpetuating and transmitting them to posterity.—*(all shew surprize)*—This was natural, and I, in consequence, selected this amiable and deserving lady for the honour of bearing my name.—*(Lady M. shews evident signs of surprize at his speech)*—And though Providence for these twenty years last past, that we have been married, had withheld the blessing I have always prayed for on our union—yet at last my silent wishes have prevailed.—*(Lady M. appears much distressed.—The company scarce refrain from open laughter)*.—I don't wonder, my friends, at your astonishment—I could at first hardly believe it myself, till my friend Lovejoke convinced me of it.—In a word, my dear lady is, as you see *(taking her by the hand)* in a way that promises me soon a Son and Heir.

LADY M. *(screaming)*.

Lord! Sir Simon, what are you saying? you have lost your senses.

OMNES *(laughing)*.

Sir Simon, we wish you joy.—It is, indeed, very apparent—ha, ha, ha.

LADY M.

Sir Simon—gentlemen—am I to be thus insulted in my own house?—Your wit, Mr. Lovejoke, has been ill applied, and may possibly bring you penitence.
(going.)

LOVEJOKE.

Let me entreat you, Lady M. to stay a moment, while I explain the matter to you.—It is but an innocent stratagem to recal you all to a sense of propriety. *This (producing a pad) this is the cause of all these mistakes.*
(the ladies shriek)

LOVEJOKE (to the gentlemen).

These ladies, in compliance with the fashion of the times, have contrived, by means of this ingenious invention, to assume that appearance, which they have not naturally.—Hence Sir Simon's mistaken idea—hence your groundless jealousies (to Captain and Clerimont).

CAPTAIN.

What—Is that all?

CLERIMONT.

Is that all?

SIR SIMON.

Is that all?

CAPTAIN.

But, Sir, we are all then your jest.

LOVEJOKE.

Be calm.—The whole of my conduct has been but a well-meant satire on so indecent a practice——“not

F 2

“guided

“guided by any desire of uselessly tormenting you,
 “but by a wish of being instrumental in exploding a
 “custom, at which nature and reason equally revolt.”

CAPTAIN.

You might have effected this, I think, Sir, without thus publicly exposing us all.

LOVEJOKE.

No, PUBLIC RIDICULE IS EVER MORE EFFECTUAL FOR REFORMATION THAN PRIVATE ADMONITION.
 “However, in the present case, it is not very public,
 “you are all friends, and may derive benefit from the
 “lesson.”—It will teach the married lady the danger of putting on an appearance, which may kindle the pernicious flame of jealousy in her husband, and the single not to hazard the ruin of her reputation by rendering it impossible to distinguish the innocent from the guilty.

CAPTAIN.

But *I* have been the chief sufferer in the plot—why was I so tormented?

LOVEJOKE.

Your groundless jealousy deserved it.—It will teach you to believe nothing of your lady in future, without investigation and immediate, cool explanation.

SIR SIMON.

And what will it teach *me*?—Indeed, I take this very ill of you, Lovejoke.

LOVEJOKE.

Why, indeed, Sir Simon, its effects have been so
 happy

happy in your family, that I can hardly advise my lady to renounce it, and, indeed, it is fit only for ladies of certain years, begging her ladyship's pardon, who may perhaps be allowed to *manufacture* an appearance which they *can never have in reality*; so that I would have my lady wear it still.

SIR SIMON.

Poor comfort!—sad substitute for a *Son and Heir*!
—I thought to have had a little boronet.

LOVEJOKE.

Come, my friends, let me see you all join hands in token of your own reconciliation and my pardon.—
I am sure none of the *ladies present* will hereafter offend in the same point; well convinced that *Confusion* and *Shame* must ever attend those, who “*outstep the Modesty of Nature.*”

Exeunt omnes.

FINIS.

happy to see you, and I am sure you will find me
 very much the same as I was when you last saw me.
 I am very much interested in the progress of the
 fair, and I hope to see you there. I have many
 things to show you, and I am sure you will like
 them very much.

Yours truly,

John Smith

Enclosed is a letter from the fair.



Enclosed are the letters from the fair, and the
 letter from the fair, and the letter from the fair.
 I am sure you will find them very interesting.
 I am sure you will find them very interesting.

Yours truly,

